

## **Impact of Influenza Vaccine Shortage on the Spokane Regional Health District**

October 29, 2004

The Spokane Regional Health District (SRHD) ordered 8,000 doses of influenza vaccine from Aventis and 40 doses of Flu-Mist for the 2005-6 season. In "typical" years, we provide clinics at our health district sites for high-risk individuals and also, later in the season, give shots in businesses and other municipalities. Eight thousand doses represent our usual usage. All state-supplied pediatric vaccine is distributed to our community providers.

During September, the SRHD received 2,000 doses of vaccine from Aventis. Other than, "It will arrive sometime in October," we were unable to obtain any information about when we would receive the rest of our order. After the Chiron announcement on October 5, Aventis told us that we would receive 2,000 more doses but they could assure nothing more. These were received during the week of October 14.

Even before October 5, we were limiting administration to people over 65 years, infants ages 6 to 23 months, people with qualifying chronic diseases and pregnant women because of our inability to get more information from Aventis and our sense of uncertainty about the supply. After the October 5 announcement, we experienced community panic and huge demand. There were long lines extending outside of the health district building. Using our emergency plan incident command system, we ran clinics for the above-mentioned risk categories until we ran out of our initial 2,000 doses on October 11.

Health district resources diverted to the clinics included employees in all parts of the dealing with phone inquiries, field public health nurses assisting with shots and many employees assisting with crowd control and other logistical issues. The American Red Cross provided volunteers, coffee and food. A video was played in our auditorium for waiting people (once they made it into the building).

We are currently providing 2,000 doses by a phone lottery appointment system. On October 25, we established a call center at the health district with ten operators. We had the technology in place through the bioterrorism grant. Operators (all SRHD employees) used a script to screen callers for risk. Each operator assigned people to appointment blocks on a single day. During that day 2,100 appointments were given and 400 people were put on a waiting list to be called in if any vaccine is left after the appointments are completed. While all of our phone lines were jammed all day on October 25, we are currently administering approximately 250 shots per day without long lines and additional staffing.

Aventis told us to expect to hear from them about whether we would receive additional vaccine by October 29 but this information has not yet been provided.

Most providers in Spokane County had administered whatever limited amounts of vaccine that they had received before October 5. We are hearing that some large clinics are receiving additional vaccine in various amounts. We have received very few reports of indiscriminate administration of vaccine. One provider, who pre-paid for 13,000 doses from Aventis, has received 7,500 doses and has been informed that she will receive an additional 2,500 doses on November 5. She intended to provide large flu clinics in businesses this season, giving shots for \$20. She has worked with the health district to identify practices and facilities serving high-risk individuals where she can re-sell the vaccine for \$15 per dose. She has sold or administered vaccine to large medical practices, long-term care facilities, assisted living facilities and senior centers.

Received on November 1, 2004

From: Kim Marie Thorburn, MD, MPH

Health Officer

Spokane Regional Health District

509-324-1501 phone, 509-324-1507 fax

kthorburn@spokanecounty.org